

In the August 11th edition of NOW RADIO, editor Howard Rose writes an interesting article on how unlicensed stations could operate almost legally with the exception of the wireless Telegraphy Act, in particular the suggestion is made that the station should register as a Limited Liability Company, a point mentioned to our solicitor

"Setting up a limited company for illegal purpose is a serious offence" was the reply. Apart from invalidating the company limited liability status it could leave the directors open to a charge of conspiracy. However a limited company selling airtime to advertisers may be legal if they are active in other fields. Surely Howard would be aware of this.

Comment from ILR jock after hearing an aircheck tape of Merseyside station Radio Veronica.

"I thought it was an ILR station till I heard those bloody jingles."
"It's almost MOR isn't it."

Those of you who regularly follow the everyday story of London folk in BBC Television's Eastenders will no doubt be delighted on one of the latest storylines in which Cafe owner Ali Osman has been recording items for his local pirate radio station. Not only that but our Ali was more than surprised when he spotted a DTI detector van going around Albert Square. Unconfirmed reports suggest that Eric Gotts has been signed up for a cameo role following his appearance in Bandung File on Channel 4.

Remember Captain Midnight, the american TV pirate who was caught interfering with Satellite broadcasts as a protest against the scrambling of signals, well Channel 4 have named a television programme after him. "Captain Midnight-Thief of the Airwaves" will feature bizarre clips from foreign television programmes.

If you think about it Free Radio is rather like a London Bus. Such is the case with the Caroline Movement's Bulletin, you wait for ages and ages, then they all come along at once!

With the BBC reluctantly agreeing to surrender one of their medium wave frequencies its interesting to note the choice of 247 metres, formally belonging to Radio One, and now home to classical music station Radio Three. 247 is certainly the poorest of the corporation's AM channels. Will the move deprive cricket followers of their service during the summer months or will Radio Three be allowed access to one of the four plus nationwide frequencies held by Radios one and two.

Short Wave CSOing stations Radio Duck and BEMS have developed a new method of continuing their conversation. Pioneered on July 19th, the two operators used the telephone!

It just wasn't Bruce Purdy's week. After the problems concerning the launch of Radio Sovereign, the station's advertisement manager was ready to take a month long break in sunny Corfu starting on July 14th. However the 0200 flight out of Liverpool was considerably delayed and didn't leave until well after Middyay.

Many thanks to the Caroline Movement for their help and co-operation to Wavelength at Driftback 20, and to this issue's contributors.

Wavelength 18 is due for publication in late October, the deadline is October 6th.

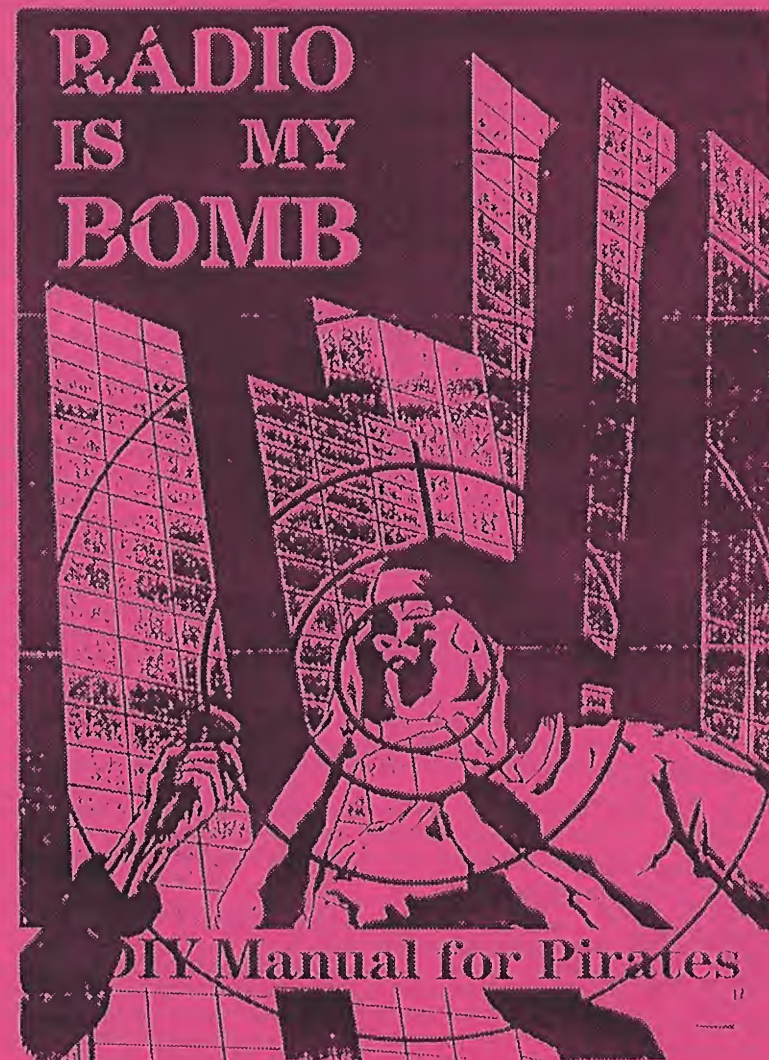
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WAVELENGTH

WAVELENGTH

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1987

No.17



A GOOD READ?

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Po Box 5, Hunstanton, Norfolk, PE36 5AU.

With the success that Radio Sovereign once enjoyed in Twickenham, and advertising rates considerably cheaper than those on the ILR network the relaunched Sovereign should be set for instant popularity, however lack of proper organisation looks set to spoil the station's chances. Tests from the Irish republic have been broadcast for several weeks by Boyneside Radio co-owner and engineer Headie Eddie, from a site a short distance away from his County Louth home, which he has in the past used for the transmission of his own Short Wave station Radio Rainbow. The test tapes comprised of promotional recordings forwarded by Howard Rose, of Sovereign's parent organisation Now Radio Communications. These tapes were then mixed in with music in Ireland by Eddie. Mr Rose was involved with the original radio Sovereign, during its days in Twickenham, and ran the station there along with John Kenning.

Eddie, when we spoke to him in early July was not happy with his side of the bargain, the tests had been on the air for more than a month and he was still without payment for the transmission of the tapes, and for the connection of an electricity supply to a new Short wave site, as at that time his house was being used with the short wave aerial being suspended from an ESB pole at the rear of his garden. Likewise Sovereign's proposed marketing area of North West England, North Wales and South West Scotland met with some scepticism 'If Nova couldn't get into the North West with 50kw Sovereign wouldn't do it with 1' Eddie said. We asked for Mr. Jackson's reaction 'He may very well be right' was the reply. However Eddie also came in for criticism when I told him that he was not happy with the situation. 'Eddie is the negative one' he said.

This however does not solve several basic problems the medium wave channel of 1521kHz cannot be clearly heard in Liverpool, sandwiched between Radio City and BBC Radio Merseyside, likewise the launch date for the at present Sundays only schedule was put back from July 12th. Tests then appeared on July 19th, inviting potential advertisers to call the station's Kettering headquarters. We called the number, part of the Now Radio Newline and found it full of information on Sovereign. The next week Sovereign was silent and the newline offered no explanation.

Sovereign finally commenced full programming on August 2nd, however the programme tapes for Chris Elliot and Paul Graham were aired twice, the only advertisement noted was an internal promotion for the Now Radio Newsletter. Subsequent weeks have brought a mixture of programming and test tapes. Howard Rose is undoubtedly displeased with the way the station has begun, but he and his team of Bruce Purdy and Chris Elliot are in for some serious thinking if the station is to be a shadow of its former self.

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Front Illustration: The Book.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Year's Subscription UK: £4.00
Europe and Ireland: £4.30
Rest of the World: £4.90
Single Copies: UK 65p
Europe, Ireland, Rest of the World
3 International Reply Coupons.
Make Cheques and Postal orders
payable to Wavelength.

M.V. ROSS REVENGE

Staff Changes. . . More Staff changes and a new Jingle Package.

Both Jeff Morris and Dave Wilson failed to spend much more than a week on board the Ross Revenge. Jeff's last programme, we believe was heard on July 19th, whilst Dave Wilson was only reported on the one election Night programme over June 11th/12th (making his inclusion on our last schedule listing incorrect), both of whom found life on the North Sea a bit too much for them. The station returned to 21 hours a day and the final four hours shared between Jackie Lee, Andy Robin and Paul Graham.

Then on July 5th, for the first time since Caroline returned from the Ross Revenge the entire line up was changed. An early closedown was made a midnight the previous evening, disappearing in mid record, and the weekday line up from July 6th read as follows;

0500 Kevin Turner
0900 David Baker
1300 Tony Peters
1700 John Tyler
2100 Jamie King
0100 Closedown

although an early closedown was made on Monday evening for the regular maintenance session at 0000. The News was shared amongst the DJs. With all the DJs changing at once we thought that Caroline was adopting a similar staffing policy to Monique, with semi-regular DJs divided into teams, however this was not the case as David Baker left after 11th July. As a result of this move the station moved to 5 hour programme splits, and news was missing all day on July 12th, so the new line up

0500 Kevin Turner
1000 John Tyler
1500 Tony Peters
2000 Jamie King
0100 Closedown.

Further staff movements, this time in a seawards direction, came on July 20th when new man Nick Bolland moved into the 2100 show with the remaining staff moving the schedule back into 4 hour splits. Tony Peters and John Tyler, now both used to doubling up on programmes were both relieved, Tony commenting that time flies quickly when you're enjoying yourself, and John now regarding Saturday, when he didn't have to get up early to read the news as his day off. New promotions were now heard on the air for a Caroline Rock Show to be held in Chatham, Kent featuring the popular 70s band, Mud.

From July 29th we heard a promotion for the Reading Rock Festival, a continuation following for 'Caroline Festival News' was spoken to the same backing as used by Charlie Wolf in his Eurosiege reports of two years previous.

The 2100 programme on July 31st consisted of continuous music, which heralded the loss of a further presenter, to be replaced the next day by first timer Keith Francis, along with Jackie Lee, replacing Tony Peters, and Steve Conway back on the news bulletins. Keith, after a nervous first few days became quite talkative, whilst Steve put his talents to good use by producing a Computerised Weather forecast and Advertisement log for Kevin Turner. The weekday schedule from August 3rd read thus;

0500 Kevin Turner
0900 Jackie Lee
1300 John Tyler
1700 Jamie King
2100 Keith Francis
0100 Closedown

News;
Steve Conway

On August 9th both Caroline 558 and Radio Monique were off the air until 1300, with no explanation noted. The following day a new set of jingles were introduced, recorded by PAMS in the United States. These identify the station as 'Caroline 558', 'Loving Awareness on 558', 'Europe's Best Music on Caroline 558'. In addition two new advertisements/promotions were aired for a new Brighton Records Fare & A sponsored walk in aid of the World Wildlife Fund.

Over the weekend of August 15th Jamie King and John Tyler came off the Ross Revenge to be replaced by Paul Graham and Simon West. At the same time Paul revoiced the World Wildlife Fund promotion and a new promotion for the Caroline Rock Show was heard. The schedule from August 17th.

0500 Kevin Turner	News;
0900 Jackie Lee	Steve Conway
1300 Keith Francis	
1700 Paul Graham	
2100 Simon West	
0100 Closedown	

PEOPLE

David Baker spent just a week on board the Ross Revenge finding life on the North Sea not his cup of tea. His previous credits have included Dublin stations Kiss FM, Heartbeat and KLAS, he has now returned home to work on Radio West. Keith Francis and Simon West are both confident broadcasters. Simon belonging to the 'shout at the microphone' club. Welcome aboard. Paul Graham will only be doing short stints in the future as he has a wife and young family on land. Paul spent his shoreleave working in discos and recording programmes for Radio Sovereign.

VIEWPOINT

'The Passage' has extended the viewpoint service during the week, now running from 1800-2300. A period of continuous music runs from 2130-2200 following on From Word for Today, however there has been an obvious delay in broadcasting the tapes from the Passage has listeners have been invited to attend a series of talks at the London Palladium, with guest speakers mentioned after their scheduled dates of appearance. In addition the promotions for Viewpoint aired on the 558 service have failed to mention the new programme.

The 'Overdrive' continuous music ceased during late June. The Caroline movement reports that this was put out as a test by former Overdrive host Nigel Roberts, who was on board the Ross Revenge doing some engineering work. We suspect it was run as an exercise in winding up Free Radio writers.

M.V. COMMUNICATOR

At the Driftback 20 convention on August 15th, Promotional man Robbie Day was quoted as saying that Laser would be back on the air in two weeks, Robbie has in the past made some rash promises, so we will not spend too much time monitoring the band. Nonetheless we wish Robbie, and those with him the best of luck during their forthcoming court case, and hope that justice will prevail.

The rumourvine has hinted that Radio Monique may leave the Ross Revenge and join the communicator once back on the air. Reports which have angered the Caroline management, but it may be that Caroline already has a buyer for the daytime airtime on 963.

FM	88	92	96	100	104	108	MHz		
SW	60	65	80	100	130	180	MHz		
MW	54	60	70	80	100	120	140	160	kHz
LW	150	170	190	220	250	270	285	kHz	

LOGGING TABLE

Short Wave stations logged, June/July 1987.

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 6200 | RADIO VALLERI 7/6 (1) |
| | WEEKEND MUSIC RADIO 28/6 (2) |
| 6204 | RADIO DUCK 7/6, 5/7, 12/7, 19/7, 26/7 (3) |
| | RADIO 48 28/6 (4) |
| | RADIO NEPTUNE 12/7 (5) |
| 6206 | 4FWS-For Freedoms World Service 6/6 (6) |
| 6209 | RIVERSIDE RADIO 28/6, 19/7 (7) |
| | 4FWS 28/6 (6) |
| | Radio Marabu 5/7 (4+8) |
| | ABC 12/7 (9) |
| 6210 | RIVERSIDE RADIO 14/6 (7) |
| | Maple Leaf Radio 7/6, 14/6 (10) |
| 6221 | RELAY STATION |
| | FRS Holland 21/6 (11) Programmes in English, Dutch and German. |
| | RADIO TELSTAR (12) |
| | CLOC-Clandestine Listeners' Club Germany 26/7 (13) |
| 6224 | RADIO PAMELA 14/6, 19/7 (14) |
| | RADIO INTERNATIONAL 12/7 (?) |
| 6225 | SUD WEST RADIO 7/6 (15) |
| 6230 | RECC-RADIO EAST COAST COMMERCIAL 7/6, 5/7 (16) Free Radio Programme |
| 6232 | BRI-Britain Radio International 28/6, 26/7 (4+17) |
| | PFBS-Pirate Freaks' Broadcasting Service 26/7 (11+17) |
| 6240 | RADIO RAINBOW 7/6, 21/6 (18) |
| | RTE 2 FM 7/6 |
| | Q102 7/6 |
| | Radio West 7/6 |
| | Boyneside Radio 14/6, 28/6 |
| | WLR 14/6, 12/7 (19) |
| | RTE 1 21/6 |
| | Radio Marabu 28/6 (4+8) |
| | Radio Sovereign 19/7 (20) |
| | Good News Radio 26/7 (21) - Religious Programming |
| 6255 | RTR-Reel to Reel Radio (22) |
| 6261 | RELAY STATION |
| | FRS Holland 12/7 (11) |
| 6267/8 | RADIO ORION 7/6, 14/6 (23) |
| | 4FWS 7/6 (6) |
| 6270 | RADIO VALLERI 14/6, 5/7 (1) |
| 6275 | RADIO WAVES INTERNATIONAL 21/6, 28/6, 12/7, 26/7 (24) |
| | Radio Rainbow Germany 19/7 (25) |
| | CLUTTER FREE 26/7 (?) - Same team as Radio Hot Wire |
| 6280 | WESTSIDE RADIO 7/6, 21/6, 28/6, 5/7, 12/7, 19/7, 26/7 (1) |
| | 4FWS 7/6 (6) |
| | BEMS 7/6, 21/6, 19/7 (26) |
| | 41FR 14/6, 26/7 (1) |
| | Satellite Broadcasting Service 21/6 (8) |
| | Radio Joystick 28/6 (8) |

- 6285 RADIO TITANIC 7/6 (11)
RADIO APOLLO 21/6,5/7 (16)
WLR 28/6 (19)
- 6290 RADIO ORION 12/6,21/6,27/6,28/6,5/7,12/7,19/7,26/7 (23)
4FWS 28/6 (6)
Radio Limit 12/7 (8)
- 6293 PFBS 28/6 (11+17)
- 6295 RADIO NOVA (BELGIUM) 7/6,21/6 (27)
WMR 26/7 (2)
- 6299 RADIO KRISTEL 28/6,26/7 (28)
- 6300 SPECTRUM LEISURE COMMUNICATIONS 7/6,21/6 (29)
WFRL-Wonderful Free Radio London 14/6,12/7 (16)
WMR 21/6,5/7 (2)
- 6310 RADIO IRELAND INTERNATIONAL 14/6 (Carrier Only) (30)
Pulsar 98 (Local station in Balbriggan) 12/7
- 6312 RADIO IRELAND INTERNATIONAL 12/7 (30)
NDCR-North Dublin Community Radio 7/6 (31)
Radio Scorpio 5/7 (4)
Radio West 19/7
- RADIO BRIDGITTE 28/6 (32)
- 6330 RADIO HOT WIRE 19/7 (?)
- 6850 RADIO SKYWAVE 26/7 (34)
Falcon Radio 7/6,14/6,28/6 (34)
Radio Sounds 21/6,12/7,19/7 (8)
Y95 28/6
- 7361 RADIO 101 INTERNATIONAL 7/6,14/6 (Carrier Only) (35)
Radio Joystick 19/7 (8)
Radio Marabu 26/7 (4+8)
- 7376 RADIO ACUARIUS 14/6,26/7 (36)
- 7383 DUTCH RELAY SERVICE (37)
Radio Hexagon 14/6 (38+39)
- RADIO STELLA INTERNATIONAL 28/6,12/7,19/7 (19) Loggings: Podney R. Sixe
- WLR 5/7 (19)

'Commercial' stations such as Radio Dublin have been omitted from the list

ADDRESS BOOK

The Rosewarne Downs mailing address in Camborne, Cornwall was closed in mid July due to personal reasons, and the operator requests that no more station mail is sent to this address.

- 1. 310 Collins Avenue West, Dublin 9, Ireland.
- 2. 42 Arran Close, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge, England, CB1 4SH.
- 3. R.D. c/o EM Nectar, WCLN 3XX.
- 4. Postbus 19074, 3501 EE, Utrecht, The Netherlands.
- 5. Postbus 185, Heerde, The Netherlands
- 6. Box 255, Venus, Texas, 76084, USA
- 7. Postbus 39, Waterford Ireland.
- 8. Postfach 220342, 5600 Wuppertal 22, West Germany
- 9. 4 Arundel Square, Waterford Ireland.
- 10. Po Box 1133, Valley View, Alberta, Toronto, Canada
- 11. Postbus 41, 7700 AA Dedemsvaart, The Netherlands
- 12. Postbus 59, 7260 AB Ruurlo, The Netherlands

- 13. Postfach 540101, 4100 Duisburg 11, West Germany
- 14. 129B Milton Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 2PZ, England.
- 15. Postfach 1471, 6690 St. Wendel, West Germany
- 16. Po Box 5, Hunstanton, Norfolk, PE36 5AU
- 17. 32 Victoria Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 4ND
- 18. 151 Moneymore, Drogheda, County Louth, Ireland
- 19. 23 South Beachwood, Edinburgh, Scotland EH12 5YR.
- 20. Po Box 45, Kettering, Northants, NN16 0NW, England.
- 21. Brookdale House, Ballynona, Middleton, County Cork, Ireland.
- 22. Po Box 140, Ashford, Kent.
- 23. R.O. 82B Edgewood Road, Rednall, Birmingham, England, B45 8SG
- 24. BP 130, 92504 Rueil Malmaison, Cedex, France.
- 25. Postbus 38, 6744, ZG Ederveen, The Netherlands
- 26. 185 Fleet Street, London EC4, England.
- 27. Postbus 5, 2638, Reet, Belgium
- 28. 514 Brighton Road, South Croydon, Surrey, England.
- 29. BM Broadcasting, London, WCLN 3XX.
- 30. 31 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1, Ireland.
- 31. Walden House, Oscar Traynor Road, Coolock, Dublin 5, Ireland.
- 32. c/o Bridgitte Van Gelder, Postbus 10, Rouveen, 795470, The Netherlands
- 34. Po Box 1686, Dublin 1, Ireland
- 35. BP 2, 4680 Gemmenich, Belgium
- 36. Postbus 65027, 3002 DA Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- 37. Postbus 81, 3450 AB Vieuven, The Netherlands
- 38. Postfach 1225, 4354, Datteln, West Germany.
- 39. 10 Bromyard Crescent, Paulsgrove, Portsmouth, PO6 3SP

The addresses of unofficial relays have been omitted.

NEWS

Scottish station WEEKEND MUSIC RADIO (2) made a special broadcast on July 5th, following the recent visit to the Irish republic by Steve West and Adrian Cooke. The two talked with Jack Russell of their experiences. WMR can normally be found around 6300kHz.

The SCOTTISH FREE RADIO NETWORK (17+19) moved their transmitter to 7384kHz, 41 metre band as of June 28th. Previous transmissions in the 48 metre band were not as successful as first anticipated due to aerial inefficiencies, which have now been resolved. The network comprises of Radio Stella, Radio Omega and WLR. A further 48 metre band transmitter is proposed to be used in the near future.

RADIO PAMELA (14) made a lengthy broadcast on July 19th on 6224, this was followed after 1300 by a QSO with Radio Orion and BBMS, the latter had been relayed by Westside Radio earlier in the morning. The QSOing which also used 6204 lasted until 1540, with conditions holding out well.

Former short wave station operator Phil Collins is planning a return to the air with a test transmission on 6290. Phil previously ran RADIO CAVENDISH and also was heard on ATLANTA RADIO.

Norman Nelson was heard commenting on the current trend of CSO stations on the short wave during the RADIO EAST COAST COMMERCIAL (16) Dx programme on August 2nd. He illustrated the point with excerpts from Tony Hancock's 'The Radio Ham' and his own comic inserts. Norman likened the operators activities to CB Radio.

WFRL-WONDERFUL FREE RADIO LONDON (16) were amongst stations playing recordings to commemorate the passing of the Marine Offences Act, this was in their broadcast on August 9th. The following Sunday those remembering 1967 included Radio East Coast Commercial and Britain Radio.

RADIO DUCK (3) missed their broadcast on August 9th when their aerial fell down.

LONDON

Andy Walker

Well the battle for space on London's airwaves is hotting up, stations squeezing in between other operators, moving frequencies to get a better signal out over the capital and using more power to get out over the 'others' that are on the same channel, that's the way London's FM band is looking at the moment. R-FM DJ Claire Mansfield had a moan at Fresh FM radio a few weeks ago, asking them to move channel because R-FM were there before them, she said they were upping the power to 'get over them'. It's good listening. London now has around 30 stations on FM, all of them trying to find a permanent frequency to broadcast on. Saturday 8th August saw the return of Horizon Radio on 94.5 calling itself Horizon '87. Now I don't think that this is the original Horizon as run by Chris Stewart, just a bunch of lads who have got a rig and jumped on the bandwagon and calling themselves Horizon Radio, that's my view.

The best news of the year so far has got to be the return of Radio Free London on 92.5FM. The station is run by the original members of a few years ago, fronted by Kenny Myers, and at the moment they are on Sunday evenings only. RFL play a mixture of music from rock to Top 40 and oldies. The audio signal from the station is very good.

As far as I know the DTI have not raided the South London Soul stations for a few months now. This has meant a good 24 hour schedule from TKO and LWR, who have had more technical troubles with their equipment over the past few weeks. Phase 1 on 90.9FM have also gone 24 hours, as have SKY RADIO, 91.7FM, QUEST 89.9FM. So the first week in August has been a good one for FM stations over London. The weekenders SOLAR and KISS are still going strong, along with ROCK on 90.2FM with more Soul and Hip-Hop music (Yawn) STARPOINT RADIO 94.3FM made a powerful return on 8th August with tests of non-stop music throughout the weekend. I phoned them on Monday evening only to find out they were using just 30 watts, the signal was over modulated which made it sound stronger. Starpoint haven't been on air much this year due to many problems with cash flow which was caused by the eight raids just before Christmas, but hopefully they are back for quite a while now. DLR-DIRECT LINE RADIO were back on the capital's airwaves towards the end of the week with a good mixture of music on 92.4FM. As I keep saying it's nice to hear a Radio station in London playing something other than Soul music. On Saturday 15th, the day of Driftback 20, Starpoint were in Stereo, fitting in the encoder overnight and sounding a lot better. SOLAR 93FM were very weak at my location, they have moved from Pirate Alley at Crystal Palace to a site in North London. The reason for this is that they had a raid a few weeks ago and lost the studio, DJ CJ Carlos was doing his programme at the time and of course is now in Big trouble! Since then he has moved back to TKO with Graham Gold. That's it for this time I've taken up too much space already.

MERSEYSIDE

RADIO ATLANTIS on 936kHz are currently broadcasting a Friday to Monday schedule with DJs Steve Bishop and Rick Lane. Hours vary but the station is usually on air for 6 hours on days of broadcasting. Atlantis have not however been without problems, mainly caused by the presence of the DTI. They were raided on July 13th at 4pm, transmitter, Studio equipment and records were all confiscated, despite the recent House of Lords ruling. Steve Bishop was charged here. The station continued and a further raid attempt was made on July 24th, this was unsuccessful, however the station remained off the air for most of the day. The address is 150 Rake Lane, Wallasey, Merseyside.

RADIO MERSEY WAVES have also suffered from raids by the DTI, the latest being on August 16th, which has cast doubts on the future of the station, but knowing their past history a return will almost certainly be made at some future date. Technical troubles caused Merseywaves to be off the air on July 24th, however Phil Davies, Paul Woods and owner Burt Williams worked through the night on the 25th to enable the station to return the next morning.

RADIO VERONICA 104.7 are still operating on low power, with the intent -ion to return to more regular broadcasts as soon as is possible. In the meantime the station hasn't been silent and linked up with Irish station Radio West during their Free Radio programme on July 20th. In the West studio was Don Allen, Phil Hilton, shortly to join BBC Radio Merseyside and Veronica DJ Dean Bartlett, in Liverpool was Neil Frazer. Meanwhile a new Radio Veronica International have been heard on AM. Quality is muffled, and the station announces an address in Croxteth.

MERSEY FM were in court on July 22nd. In addition to the fine a 2 year condition discharge was given. Stereo equipment and some records were returned.

Other stations noted in the area recently have been DTI FM 106.2, Slag Off International 105.3, Scott FM 102.3 and Horizon Radio 105.3, who were raided in late July.

with thanks to Neil Frazer and Tim Jackson.

COUNTRYWIDE

NOTTINGHAM

Cosmos Radio are currently off the air, but a return is expected to be made in late August on 97.5FM.

During the General Election the ILR station Radio Trent reported on its news that the station's transmissions had been interrupted by a pirate radio operator. The same type of occurrence apparently happened during the miners strike of 1984. However I don't know of anyone who actually heard these broadcasts!

SUFFOLK.

The Ipswich newspaper 'East Anglian Daily Times' reported the presence of NORTH SOUND RADIO on July 28th. The station broadcasts to the town on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights for three hours. However North Sound would appear to be operating on low power as after some research no further reports were forthcoming. No frequency is known, but the station is thought to be on FM.

Adrian Cooke.

Andy Walker

On Tuesday July 28th, 1987 Radio and Television News, plus the daily newspapers covered the disturbing news that Pirate Radio operators are attacking DTI investigators when carrying out raids. The way the media covered these attacks made it look like All pirate stations were doing this. As we all know these attacks are carried out by the odd few. It has been said that this is another dirty tricks campaign by the DTI, maybe so, but I have known for quite a while now that these attacks have been taking place, but I didn't know on what scale. We all know the Graham Thompson story, quoted by the press as having been 'murdered' while raiding a station, where in fact he died of a heart attack a few months after his was attacked during a raid. The 'odd few stations' in the eyes of the public, have given pirate radio a very bad name, and this is not good news for the Free Radio World. We now know that a document on how to carry out attacks on investigators does exist, but what we would really like to know is, who is behind it? They or he is definitely not a friend of Free Radio.

It is not the likes of the major stations LWR, TKO, KISS, SOLAR and the rest of the 'Big Boys' who are carrying out these attacks, even though they are black music stations, to say it is the black operators who are doing this would be wrong, the main men behind LWR and TKO are Black where SOLAR and KISS are run by white operators, but it does not take a lot of brain power to work out that the stations named by the National Press are run by blacks. PCRL and Second City Radio were just two names printed in the follow up to the front page of the Times on July 28th. The Times on the 29th mentioned these two stations. Are they telling us that they are behind some of the attacks? In the same article they quoted Zannetos Tofallis of London Creek Radio 'We are very much against this sort of thing. We have never seen this booklet'. IGR are hardest hit by the DTI so I find it strange that they have never seen the document. DJ Soca/B of JBC Radio was quoted as saying their relationship with the investigators is 'most cordial', he also said 'We have never heard of this anarchist group and we detest violence, we just want a licence' The Times went on to say that the anarchist group known as the Hooligan Press used a box number in Old Gloucester Street, London WC1, The British monomarks agency, which has been used by the Caroline movement for a number of years. They said that the mail, EM/Hurricane, The code for Hooligan Press was collected sporadically. They went on to say that the agency was used by left wing organisations including the highly political, but now defunct Our Radio pirate outfit. The London Evening Standard headline was 'Chicago-style Terror of Radio Pirates' which to my mind was well over the top, thank God guns haven't come into it, but that's what the standards first impressions gave. Anti-Pirate radio was the order of the day. Daily Express 'Radio Pirates in Terror War', London Evening News 'Pirate Radio Mobs Terror Campaign', Daily Telegraph 'Pirate Radio Investigators Ambushed' and so on, The press stuck the knife in and rubbed salt in the wound as well, I could not believe how one sided it all was. Thank heavens that Tony Monson of Solar Radio quoted in the Evening Standard said that 'We are very disturbed by this news' and Gordon Mac of Kiss FM 'If we are taken off the air we accept it. They have their job to do. The Robbie Vincent show on Radio London was flooded with calls from operators and supporters putting the 'Pirates' views forward on Tuesday lunch time which was of some relief. However the general public's view of the Pirates was a bad one, the rot has set in, now we must rebuild the image of the Free Radio stations, stop these attacks and get on with the job, the fight for a real free radio system in this country is a long way off, forget about community radio, it might be alright for the odd few, but it's not what I'm fighting for, we want a system like they have in America, all types of radio broadcasting for all of the people, the way things are going with these stupid terror attacks on people who are 'just doing a job' the day is still a very long way off.

Steve West

With the title 'Radio is my Bomb', plus the fact that the first anybody seemed to have heard of it was when it was cited on TV as being the cause of DTI staff being attacked all over the place, this book didn't seem to be the sort of thing that you could get from the local branch of WH Smith, therefore I was intrigued when a copy materialised on my doorstep, and read through it to find out just what it was all about. . .

The book itself is good quality consisting of 70 A4 printed pages with diagrams, sketches, photos etc all within a glossy cover. Printing is done by the Hooligan Press, source of a number of anarchist booklets and a selection of the latest titles is included in review form. The introduction sets the tone for most of the book, calling for the reclamation of the airwaves from the 'parasites who infest it', and it's not only the LEGAL stations they're on about. The first chapter gives short histories of various anarchist/agitprop stations that have been on the air in the past in the UK and the following chapter goes further afield with more detailed histories of a number of continental stations as well as a short description of the radio situation in various countries.

The third section is what it's all about: 'How to be a radio pirate'. This gives ideas on the choosing of frequencies and bands, sites and techniques for avoiding or escaping raids. It is this last piece that has caused all the fuss since it calls for stations to start a 'guerrilla war' on the air by such methods as trapping the DTI in lifts (not that they're likely to fall for it very often) or attacked the DTI and Police as they make their escape, or even attacking depots and vehicles and harassing staff at their homes etc. Of course, any pirate with half a brain would realise that this takes it out of the 'Civil Offence' type of crime into actual criminal offences, nor are those concerned as stupid as we'd like to think (or hope) they are. Perhaps appropriately chapter four deals with the legal side of things, the various W/T acts and what to do if caught. (Could be more detailed, especially in what to do if caught bopping a DTI man over the head).

Chapter five is the best part: 30 pages on building FM txs (4W, 5W, 25W and 80W p.a.'s) also filters, aerials etc, also a 60W MW tx using 6146 valve (suspect probably nearer 40W) but nothing on power supplies, inverters etc. Looking at the circuit diagrams reminded me of a book of circuits that Radio Jackie produced about eight years ago and that may well have been used (does anybody still have a copy?). Generally the sketches of circuit and pcb layouts leave a bit to be desired although they do give an idea of the finished boards. Perhaps some photos would help? The authors mention that they haven't yet built the 80W p.a. which is run from the 25W p.a. so I would be interested to hear from anybody who builds one. Obviously some technical knowledge is required for the projects.

Finally, the last page gives a list of addresses and names of various reference sources, stations, component and equipment suppliers as well as Free The Airwaves.

On the whole the book is a good idea; something that has been needed for years is a comprehensive guide to setting up a station. Unfortunately it is spoilt by the agitprop that creeps in to every other page; I feel that it could have gone into more detail about the laws involved as well as the technical details, programming techniques as well as other hints and tips. It is for these reasons therefore that I wouldn't recommend RIMB to the average newcomer to free radio: nice idea, but they've missed the target by a couple of miles.

Radio Is My Bomb is available from Hooligan Press, c/o EM Hurricane, London WC1 3XX or Radio Support Group, Box 010, 37 Stokes Croft, Bristol BS1 3PY, or Free the Airwaves, BCM Box 1502, London WC1N 3XX.

Neil Frazer

I'm writing this on Sunday August 16th, A day when most free radio stations remember their parentage and trot out all the free radio tapes and records, or at least make an attempt to get on air.

So what do we have. On medium wave only atlantis, and according to Steve Bishop only LTI FM and Veronica. Are the authorities winning or have the LJs managed to bore themselves to death with endless disco music?

To give this article some substance we take a trip back over the past twelve months and look at the music output from FM stations in Merseyside it is based on what I have heard, so if a station is not mentioned it is because I have not heard it or have not heard enough of its music to write this wonderful load of tripe.

First on the list is Slag Off International, until they grow up and stop the foul language and other childish tricks that they think are clever I don't intend to mention them again. Perhaps other magazine editors should do the same.

Chester Community Radio make only infrequent transmissions. A format that is best described as Middle of the Road, but very good. Even a bit of classical music slips into their programmes. The DJs seemed to have a playlist as the whole thing was fast moving, with records flowing into each other to give a real professional sound. If ever a station deserved a licence it's CCR.

Concept Radio slips into the Disco/Dance format but just manages to avoid this dreaded label by a few ounces of plastic. The odd chart record or Golden Oldie sticks out like the proverbial sore thumb but make the station listenable. The jocks seem to be a good bunch and the records they play don't keep being replayed every few hours. Not a bad little station. At least they prove you can be a bit different. Mersey FM could in the early days be described as a joke. The same records were played every hour or less, suggesting a very small record collection. More records arrived over the weeks, and yes you've guessed it, 12 inch disco music. The only thing imaginative to come out of the station was the infamous Pirate charts, listing at times stations not even on the air, and giving highly detailed, yet suspect technical reception reports. An engineer on ILR station Radio City commented that they didn't even have the equipment capable of giving the kind of information that Mersey FM seemed to have. Still it was entertaining.

Boring Disco 12 inch music was almost the staple diet from Julie FM, though recently more chart music was heard as several DJs from other stations joined them. The attitude of the DJs seemed to be if they liked a record it would be played to death. If their listeners liked it, great. If you didn't. Hard lines. Not the way to win an audience and keep them.

Radio Commodore, frequent on the airwaves last year seem to have disappeared recently. After listening to them for a few hours it seemed that they had a severe shortage of records. Talk by the DJs filled a lot of their airtime. I can't see any reason why a Pirate radio station shouldn't have a lot of talking if its got some point behind what is being said. When the talking degenerates into verbal aggression as it frequently did on commodore its time to tune out and wonder why the DTI raid some stations more than others.

For obvious reasons I cannot review my own Radio Veronica so I have left it for others to decide, firstly Jay Burkette. Veronica broadcasts Sundays with a pop/rock/oldies format covering a wide spectrum of music. Presentation is casual, friendly and competent, conveying the impression that DJs, including Station manager Neil Frazer, actually enjoy the tracks they play. In addition the style of programming incorporates a humorous element unique to Liverpool stations; in general highly listenable and good quality. Andy Walker writes; I have only heard Veronica once, during the first birthday broadcast. The over all sound of the station was very good, audio was clear and the mixture of music was very great. They had the odd technical problems during the day and a few buzzes here and there. I must

say that I wasn't over impressed with the home made jingles, but the son-ovox jingles used were good. The News service was also very good for a pirate station and all the jocks were very chattie!

In general most of the FM stations in the Merseyside area are very poor copies of Merseywaves, playing endless Disco/Lance music. According to Weekly Report another station is to come on the air with a "High Quality Dance Format". Please lets have a bit of thought out there. Try and be different, its not that hard to come up with an original music format. Disco music on the radio can be acceptable if it is programmed well and the DJ can make the transition from what is acceptable in the clubs to what can be good radio. Many of them can't. Somewhere out there must be some good low powered stations playing good music. If I've missed you out its because I can't hear you.

So for any would be radio station operator, before you start work on transmitters and all the other bits you need, have a good look at your record collections. The Caroline/Laser/ILR format is not that bad you know.

Adrian Cooke

Driftback 20 was designed to be the Free Radio event of the decade, the name chosen by current Caroline 558 newsreader Steve Conway. It is unlikely that any of the 250 plus who attended would have doubted the success of the occasion. The event was staged to mark the 20th anniversary of the passing of the Marine Offences Act which took so many of the offshore stations off the air, there were to be others, and of course the almost constant presence of Radio Caroline. It fell to the Caroline Movement to organise the event, and Master of Ceremonies John Birch is well practiced in handling this kind of event.

On August 15th at the Bloomsbury Crest Hotel, London Free Radio names, past and present gathered to meet each other watch films and videos and buy merchandise from various sales stands. Anoraks UK, Radio Broadcast Library, Media Monitor, Radio Today, the Caroline Movement and Wavelength were all in attendance.

Johnny Lewis was the first personality on stage, dressed in his old boiler suit from his days on board the Ross Revenge. From the audience came a person claiming he wanted to meet his all time hero Johnny Lewis, he turned out to be Charlie Wolf who met with instant applause as soon as he was recognised. The two were soon talking about Eurosiege, Charlie stating his dislike for the propaganda put out by the DTI during the period. Johnny was asked the inevitable question, would he go back to the North Sea?

"The best times of my life were spent at sea" was his rather open ended answer.

Throughout the day the giant video screen showed not only what was happening on stage but also a selection of offshore films and videos, some were new, others had been seen at such events in the past. The first film after the official opening was 'The show must go on' about Radio Nordsee, out of sequence, but nobody seemed that fussed as the programme disintegrated as the day progressed. Amongst other films being shown was 'The Black and White Pirate Show', a promotional film on Radio London and EAP's still to be completed film on the Eurosiege operation.

Guests continued to come on stage throughout the day including Mark Wesley and members of the Radio Essex team, John Harding showed slides of his time with Radio Atlantis. The big name was Johnnie Walker, responsible for bringing radio Caroline through the MOA and now back with BBC Radio One. He talked of his radio past with fondness and almost a tear in his eye, Johnnie recounted the story of the man on a fishing holiday in Clacton who brought a daily newspaper to the Mi Amigo everyday for a week following the passing of the MOA.

Behind the scenes we caught Peter Phillips, Michael Barrington, Richard Jackson, Tony Collis and the founder of Radio Caroline, Ronan O'Rahilly.

Adrian Cooke

Review: The Eleventh Hour; The Black and White and Black Pirate Show.
Channel Four Television, Monday July 13, 1987

It is only when you view the Eleventh Hour programme for the second time do you fully comprehend the message which the producers are trying to put across. Channel Four is noted for showing programmes which are not intended to appeal to a wide audience, and despite the late showing the Black and White Pirate show was a good opportunity to give the public at large a background to Free Radio past and present. However to the casual viewer at home the impression given during the film was at times unfairly biased towards the Ethnic stations. The introduction was a prime example "... and we learn how Black pirates have stormed the capital in recent years." Giving a double meaning to the title, which referred not to the quality of the film shown but to the origin of those responsible for putting Britain's Free Radio stations onto the air.

Part One opened with Black and White shots of the offshore stations in the sixties, of a kind not seen at such length on Network television for many years. The music of the day, like the BBC programme 'Rock 'n Roll years' was able to recreate the atmosphere of the time. The experienced voice of Johnnie Walker was able to cast an eye over the time passed. He was able to compare how the Labour Party, now trying to court the youth vote was the same Party, who when in power introduced the legislation against the offshore stations, however this serious point looked out of place set against the background of a dockside cafe. Following on from this a further, almost political statement, that the DJs of the time were nearly always white and middle class, this point stood alone, and was only backed up by the on screen references made to the schools attended by the two offshore DJs interviewed Johnnie Walker and Tony Blackburn.

Many of the shots shown were very much standard Offshore footage much of it being provided by the BBC, Anglia Television, and East Anglian Productions from which the Ronan O'Rahilly interview was taken. In addition Granada Television's World in Action reports on Radio Caroline were used. However what new film taken was well chosen, with new shots of the shimmering sands including the freshly painted name of Radio City and Johnnie Walker's Pirate Radio DJs lament set to film along the River Thames. Furthermore the inclusion of some of the photographs of the day taken by Martin Stevens were a pleasure to watch, however it is a great pity that the overall standard of the film did not continue into the second half.

The 1970s, although not always regarded as being a decade for major free radio developments, were given short shrift, and moving into the 1980s the producers chose to make sweeping statements about the formats of the landbased stations "The majority play Black music", and whilst not disregarding the contributions made by the Black communities in the decade so far one must not forget the equal influence of the Greek language stations, such as IGR, and those going for Community orientated programming like Jackie and Skyline. Nonetheless the interview with DEC's Lepke was able to give an insight into the founding of one of the capital's most popular Black stations, likewise PCRL, the only non London station to be shown, and the January raid on JBC, first transmitted during the 'Bandung File' programme earlier this year.

It was only towards the end of the programme that a debate on this form of radio took shape. Music critic Paul Gilroy provided constructive talk on how BBC Radio London had tried to imitate what the Black stations were doing and that you couldn't transpose the 'success' simply by holding Soul nights out, nonetheless this argument fell flat against Tony Blackburn's view that he was in a commercial world where you could not constantly play obscure tracks without mixing in music which is known to the audience grouping you are trying to reach, and once more commercial radio is introduced the stations will realise that despite their intentions of appealing to a culture, it is no good without advertisers.

There were some minor technical and production failures such as the references to Laser 550 and Johnny Walker, but to my mind the main failure was the distortion of the information presented, which to the ordinary viewer would have created the impression that it is only one group of people in Britain promoting the interests of 'Free' radio, this coupled to the early references to the white, middle class and commercial backgrounds of the original offshore pirates was far from just a sociological argument, true there were no government officials talking of frequency shortages or risks to emergency services, but the time allocated could have been used more wisely.

A quiet Scottish village is the location for WEEKEND MUSIC RADIO, typified by the position of the station's receiving aerial, which is strung across a stream, which runs behind the garden. The studio itself is set in a shed, which in order to get to one has to negotiate two rather noisy geese and two foxes, the latter in their own enclosure, although it is a great pity the geese could not be given accommodation as well. The WMR studio has been described as a one man operation, the reason being that you can only fit one man in there at a time, the rest of the space is taken up by cassette tapes, numbering over one thousand, records, the actual studio equipment, letters, magazines, receivers and assorted pieces of wire. The tape collection consists of broadcasts, which have been made from the studios and other stations which have been received there, this includes many of the Irish stations which can be picked up with surprising clarity. In addition to the usual tape and record decks the WMR studio has a telephone line running through the mixer, this is provided through two telephones (though only one is necessary a second is used because the first doesn't ring!) the telephone connects to a small transformer circuit, and that in turn to the mixer. As WMR broadcasts live calls can be made straight into the studio, by those with access to the telephone number and therefore give instant reception reports on the day's broadcast conditions. Alternatively a discussion on current radio events or a record request can be given. The use of the telephone has added much to the station, especially the holiday broadcasts.

From the studio programming is fed to a tin shack which houses the transmitters, and a surprisingly short aerial wire which we are told puts out WMR's 100 watts of power. In addition a nearby site houses more transmitter and electrical equipment.

We joined Weekend Music Radio and resident DJ Jack Russell on the morning of July 5th. After a brief spell of monitoring the band, during which time we picked up Radio Orion and Radio Apollo, the frequency of 6300 was decided upon and whilst Jack set up the transmitter my colleague Steve West commenced with some continuous music for the half hour up to the start of programmes at 1100. Today the station was to try something a little different, when instead of music Steve and myself would spend the airtime talking about our recently completed visit to Ireland. It was also decided that news reports would be given so I was dispatched to a convenient Teletext television to edit the days main stories. During our time at Sunshine Radio in Dublin we were told that the station's agreement with the NUJ included the right to take stories from the service. The stories and people of our journey kept coming and Steve was in full flight, so much that at the end of the two hour broadcast we had only played somewhere in the region of eight records, but after all music can be clearly heard on FM. By this time we had been joined by Dave Anderson, so called ex-WMR DJ although nobody could really explain how he had acquired this title, Dave had himself worked as a DJ in Ireland, and so was able to add a further perspective to the conversation.

After the official closedown had been made at shortly after 1pm, the band was checked once more, this time in the hope of a CSO with some of the other operators who had been on the air that morning. Some criticism has been levelled at WMR for their CSOing, sometimes without making an actual broadcast beforehand, this must be a matter for the individual, but used sensibly it can be a quick and economical way of operators discussing the day's conditions on the air, together with the advantage of the listener being able to compare the reception of stations taking part. Our CSO was made the more amusing for Jack Russell's constant

diving out of the studio in order to turn the transmitter on and off, for while it was switched on the operators on that part of the 48 metre band could not be heard.

With the broadcast finished it was time for lunch, and then out to a nearby hill cum mountain where on a clear day we were told that the Irish republic could be seen, but that was not all: with a receiver and 4 element aerial we were able to pick up many more varying stations on the FM band from BBC Radio Merseyside to Radio Lublin, Q102 and TTR, it had to be heard to be believed.

The set up and WMR may not be tidy to look at but the programming of the station makes it stand out from the others on the band, and it certainly was a pleasure to be part of it one morning.

During early July arguments once again erupted between two of the Merseyside FM stations, notably Radio Julie on 104.8 and Slag Off International on 105.3. It would appear that Slag Off's transmissions were interfering with those of Radio Julie, Slag Off were actively encouraging people to tune in to them in favour of Julie, who following their loss of listeners pulled Slag Off's aerial down. In return Slag Off arrived at Radio Julie's location at 4am one morning, and beat up two of the three people inside. The matter was reported to the police, and as a result a prosecution is being sought against Mike Hughes. Julie had informed the Police that the incident was over a radio station and the Police telexed the DTI, resulting in the temporary closure of Radio Julie and Merseywaves moving location.

It has recently been claimed that the council are currently turning down applications for flats from known station operators, so the following letter from the office of the director of Housing and Environmental Protection, Borough of Wirral makes interesting reading

"The Council has no specific policy on this matter, but there is a general condition of tenancy which enables a County Court Order for Possession to be sought where the tenant is convicted of using the dwelling, or allowing it to be used, for criminal or illegal purposes. This threat is usually applied where my department is aware of a pirate radio operating and the relevant authorities are also notified. From experience this tends to have the effect of moving the problem on to another location. The council has never actually taken Court action for possession on grounds of a tenant having harboured pirate radio, and the reason for this is that the whole procedure for possession can be very drawn out and once the problem has ceased, it is extremely unlikely that the County Court Judge would use his discretion to grant a possession order unless there was evidence of a recurring problem or addition grounds to be considered (e.g. anti-social behaviour etc.)."

Steve West

By now our intrepid anoraks have gone just about as far south as you can go in Ireland without getting your feet wet, and are now looking forward to visiting all those stations in the west of the country that they have missed so far.

Thursday October 2nd:- Left Kinsale and stopped off in Bandon to have another look at WKLR. This time there was somebody at the station: a receptionist who wouldn't let us in! At this time the station was live from Clonakilty 15 miles down the road but time being short we decided to give this a miss. Just as we were about to leave, one of the DJs turned up and invited us in only to be stopped by Dracula's Mother and told we couldn't come in until the boss arrived sometime within the next 24 hours. With that it was back into the car and back to Cork. A further 22 miles brought us to Mallow, home of North Cork Community Radio (NCCR). If you have to ask for directions in Ireland I suggest you do the following: ask a dozen people, take the average distance and direction and head the opposite way for twice the distance! Eventually we found NCCR on the first floor of a dance hall just outside the town from where their main FM outlet, which also doubled as the link to their other txs, came. The station was notable for being the only one which was actually owned by the community in the form of shares being sold. There was only one studio and when we arrived they were playing one of their most popular programmes which consisted of about a half hour recording from a local pub with local characters just generally talking about the weather etc. Real community radio.

From Mallow, loaded down with posters and other goodies from the station we headed north towards Limerick some forty miles away. We stopped at Rath Luirs, halfway to Limerick, for a bite to eat during which time I had a listen around on FM. The only two stations to be heard from the town were Centre Radio (why does everyone call his station Centre Radio? There's one in Cork, Clonmel, Dublin...) whose audio left a lot to be desired, and Radio Luimini. This latter I wouldn't have minded visiting just to find out if what I was hearing was true or not. At the time we were running around the country there was some big cycle race going on which at that particular time was passing through Limerick. The op/DJ on the station would interrupt his programme every few minutes/seconds to give a live commentary by leaning out of the studio window on the first floor and shouting back into the microphone as the racers went past. We turned right and headed for Tipperary.

Tipperary Community Radio is located on the first floor of the local community council offices and its three rooms house the office, main and production studios. Outside one studio was a tall cabinet housing the 250W MW tx, while downstairs in the back yard was another housing the 100 W FM tx feeding the stack of four folded dipoles. The FM tx looked familiar: it had been built by certain members of a London station who frequently come over to Ireland to check txs, etc. TCR is one of a number of real community-orientated programmes, do not set themselves to making a profit: All charges for advertising etc are used to pay for rent/equipment.

From Tipperary down to Clonmel, almost halfway back to Waterford, by which time it was getting dark. We dropped in at CBC, whose studios in Clonmel are located on the top floor of the town gate. Treated to tea and bikkies we were shown the studio, pride of place in which were two Gates turntables which we were told had come from BBC Northern Ireland. (From what we discovered during our visit, the BBC supplied most of the Irish stations with at least some of their equipment). We were also quite surprised to hear that what appeared to be a sleepy little town actually had two stations, the second started by some ex members of CBC. We stopped off at Centre Radio (yes, another one) on the way out of town for a quick chat. This station's format was more like that of, say WBN in Cork: mostly music whereas CBC was local radio/community. Still, two different stations in one town isn't bad.

Heading north again after our slight detour, we arrived in Kilkenny at about 8.30pm and set about looking for Kilkenny Community Radio (KCR). Following some trouble with the directions (see above) we eventually found the station upstairs in a barn a couple of miles outside the town. We were invited in to the studio by the DJ Larry Dowd, who then managed to get myself and JR to read out all the requests etc that were being phoned in. We finished at about 12.30am, a bit late to find a B&B, so Larry showed us what looked like a park/field where we could pitch our tent. He also invited us along to a disco he was doing the next evening and pointed out one of the problems facing the country: the women outnumber the men two to one!!!

No sooner had we got the tent up, and JR had been 'surprised' by a frog hopping up his trousers, when a Garda car pulled into the field. Ohoh we thought, we probably aren't supposed to be camping here, but instead a voice called out to ask if we were okay. 'You can't be too careful around here' they said and drove off. That's Ireland for you!

Friday October 3rd:- Listening to the radio in the morning we heard about the strikes that were affecting Sealink ferries to the continent and how they were spreading to the Liverpool and Holyhead routes. We thought it would be a good idea if we started heading back to Larne, although it would mean missing the Disco. We stopped off at KCR for a final look at the tx, aerials etc. The MW tx used here used 6 813 valves, four in the p.a and two in the modulator. Then on to Carlow and Carlow Local Radio. This had a basic studio and appeared to have just moved into the shop it occupied. The tx was in the attic over the shop and the aerial was on the roof at the back, running somewhere about 20W.

Still, no time to hang around: we had at least five more stations to visit and then we had to get back to the UK given time. Next stop was Laoise Community Radio at Mountrath some thirty miles away, where we arrived just after lunch. Here we were given the best welcome of any station, invited in and given coffee, bikkies AND a snack lunch! The studio was much the same as the others except the walls were covered in tinfoil. Whether this was to shield against RF or just for decoration we forgot to ask. Led outside we were shown what appeared to be a cooker bolted half-way up a wall. It was a cooker, and inside, amongst a spaghetti of wiring was the FM tx. There were three aerials on top of the studio building (the local TV shop): the FM outlet, a link rx aerial for outside broadcasts and another for talkback. OBs were done from a converted van with LCR painted on the side and linked back to the studio before being relayed to the other txs in the area. Unfortunately time was getting short- just how short we would soon find out- and we rushed on to our final calls at Mullingar, 50 miles away.

We reached Radio West at Mullingar late afternoon, and having located the station were shown the studios (and some much needed plumbing facilities!). Talking about the tx etc, Sean Coine, alias 'The Captain' offered to take us to the site in his car, an offer which we took up immediately. Until he could take us out to the site we decided to visit the other station in Mullingar: Midway Radio is a country and Western/Irish music station on the outskirts of the town located in one of those portable buildings next to a garage. Again a whistle stop visit, take some photos and a quick chat with the staff. The FM tx was surprising: this was a converted PMR set giving about 10W and run from a CB power supply (with battery standby). This went into a half-wave dipole and also acted as the link to their MW site.

If anybody has been to see Caroline they will have some idea of the setup at West. The first thing we saw was the 150ft mast with two portable buildings next to it: one contained the main generator, with standby outside, the other contained the txs. Asked why he didn't use the mains supply, the Captain explained that it was cheaper to generate there own power than to use the mains, besides which the ESB charged quite a lot to install the supply. Inside the tx building and this was more like it! On the right was the 1kW FM tx (ex-BBC Northern Ireland), and on the left, filling three cabinets and supposedly capable of up to 10kW was the MW tx,

all beautifully glowing valves and humming with modulation etc. I think it must have been running at about 3-5kW. Unfortunately I had just finished the last of my film so didn't get any pictures, a situation which WILL be sorted out on my next visit.

We left Mullingar with 140 miles to go back to Larne, rushed through Kells (I think there's a station there) and Ardee (there too) stopping for a few minutes at Dundalk to see if there was a chance of seeing Radio Carousel (and to get something to eat). It turned out that Carousel was now on 'automatic pilot' from 8pm so it was back in the car and off to Larne.

We got to the ferry terminal at about 10pm, to find that Sealink's last sailing had been some four hours earlier and that they were all on strike. The terminal was packed with others who had the same idea of getting back and the Townsend Thoresen ferry was full. Since we thought we might get on the 4am sailing we decided to stay at the terminal; JR grabbing some sleep on one of the benches and myself outside in the car starting to sort out the mountains of tapes. Just before midnight (the time of the sailing) I happened to stroll back into the now deserted terminal for a drink when a number of things started to happen all at once: the ticket clerk called out to ask if I was waiting for the ferry back as there was space for one more car if I had the cash for the ticket (since I had cashed in the Sealink tickets that was no problem), JR was rudely awakened from his slumbers and piled into the car on top of a pile of semi-sorted tapes, and we shot up the ramp onto the ferry at a speed not normally seen around docksides, to find as we entered the car deck that we should have backed up. Not to worry, besides they had closed the gates so we couldn't move anyway. A quick tidy, bundling the tapes into bags then up to the lounge for some food/sleep/drink etc.

Two and a half hours later we docked at Cairnryan and backed off the ferry. Driving back along the coast road towards Ayr, I switched on the radio and tuned through MW and FM, getting Radio 2 in a few dozen places and the odd BBC/ILR station in others. Putting on one of the tapes I recorded off air in Dublin and comparing it with what I could hear I wondered with radio like this, why on earth did we bother coming back???

I'd like to thank all the stations that we visited for making a very enjoyable trip. Most of them reacted quite well to having a carload of anoraks suddenly appear at their door and ask to be shown studios/txs etc. One piece of bad news that we had during our visit to Radio West was that KISS FM in Dublin had been closed down, apparently due to interference with RTM on FM. If anybody is thinking of going over for a 'Anorak Tour' it's well worth it, even if you don't get any further than Dublin. B&B places are cheap (about £10 per night) although beer (£1.40/jint) and petrol (£2.70/Gallon) are more expensive, even taking into account the currency difference (not much). Throughout our trip we were made very welcome indeed, so if you are going over whether as an anorak or just touring, you're guaranteed a great time. (This article has not been sponsored by the Irish Tourist Board) Just to prove it we've just finished another trip, so watch out for FOUR GO MAD IN IRELAND II, coming to all good magazines soon.

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